

Esther Hebrew Oral History talking about the Native Americans Around Lehi

And of course the Indians were down there on the river all the time. I would be washing the dishes...and by the way, you wouldn't go to the tap and get out the water, you had to go to the well outside, carry water in and heat it on the stove and then wash the dishes. And then you didn't throw the dish water out because there was so much grease around the edge of the water, that it went to the pigs in the pig swill. Pigswill was all scraps put in a pail, stirred, then all the dishwater to moisten. You didn't waste anything.

Talking about Indians, there was a little window there and I would look up and there would be some Indian looking at me. me about them? . The Indians from Duchesne migrated to Utah Lake every spring. You could hear them coming. You could smell them coming. Don't get me wrong. They made their fires and they cooked and they would always camp in our hollow. Now where the hollow was is all my backyard. The creek used to go around the house this way and so in that one little area was 150 trees that were native. These had never been planted or cut and the stream went right through the middle of them. They liked to camp in there.

And when we get further along, we'll talk about the depression and "tramps"... they would come to the house, and you could trust them. We had pens as long as that wall over there, full of rabbits. We grew rabbits for meat. They never bothered the rabbits. We always had bandies, little bandie chickens because they were small and would dig around and not tear things up and they would keep the bugs down and would lay around the yard their little brown eggs. The Indians may take some eggs once in a while, but they never bothered the rabbits nor killed any chickens.

But they would come to the house, they'd bring their sick. They wanted to trade anything that they had that they thought was of value, for some cooking utensils. Their utensils were heavy and they wanted the new tin or porcelain pots that they could cook in. So Daddy and Mother would make sure that they had a few pots and pans. They took care of their teeth...they had horrible teeth. They would put some oil of cloves in their cavities. And that was good medicine.

When they were at Utah Lake they fished and dried their fish, they gathered their grasshoppers and dried those. They got the sunflower seeds and dried those. They would make trips out to West Canyon and get the pine nuts, at fall time, and would gather those. So they were really self sufficient down there. And they would do the beading on whatever they were working on like their moccasins or whatever. They would have their babies and they would just live down there on the lake shore. By the way, all around the Lake in my day were Indian pictographs, all over. I'm sure that they understood the pictographs.

Anyway, getting back to the Indians... There was one old Indian that we kids called "Old Ound." He was an old Ute and more or less was a loner. When Indians got old they would put them out in the desert to take care of themselves and die. Ound would show up at our place periodically. He took a liking to me with long curls, and blue eyes. You know, he is an Indian. So he made a moosapah. I was too large for it, but he would put me in this moosapah to carry me around. I've thought of him a lot. My Mother trusted him explicitly. He and I were good friends. And the moccasins here in the museum—that small pair is the pair he made for me and the large pair, beautifully beaded both of them, was made for my Mother because she would feed him. And in exchange, sometimes he would show up with a dried rattlesnake meat. They knew how to take care of it. He would bring a bear roast that he had roasted. It would taste just like pork, absolutely. He tried to make us learn more about the Indians and he wore his buckskin clothes. I can still smell his big braids, those black beautiful braids, they smelled like campfire.

He would camp in the hollow and then he would disappear and sometime later, he would be sitting on the back porch. He was just part of the family. His buck skin clothes had a distinctive earthy smoke smell. He taught Daddy Indian sign language for the Utes. He went with Daddy and over the years. Stewart's flat where the scout camp was, he would go up there with Daddy and his scouts and teach them how to catch fish by their hands... here's the bank and underneath where the water gets in there, he would reach in there and get the fish. He taught them path finding, how to track animals, how to use a bow and arrow, how to make a bow and arrow like the Indians did... soak the wood and bend it a little bit more and more. He was truly an asset to the boys. He taught them Indian dances and how to cook what was available in the area. He tried to make them all Indians.

Well, when they were migrating from Duchesne, there would be maybe fifty in groups. They walked and maybe had a horse or two that would pull their, traverse—two poles with a blanket in between, where they would put their old, old people or equipment. They would pull behind the horse if they had one.

But when they came back in the fall, they always had a few babies. And knowing the difficult winters that they had in the Duchesne area, and at that time they weren't getting much government help, they knew those babies wouldn't survive. They would try and give Daddy and Mother these babies. I was old enough to realize, but I was still the youngest but wondered if they were going to take those babies. But no they did not. That was something that Daddy drew the line. He said that he would not separate the families. It was their responsibility to do the best they could with their children.